

Mono County Collaborative Planning Team

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MINUTES

March 27, 2003
(Adopted May 29, 2003)

Members Present: Chair Mary Pipersky, Mono Supervisors; John Eastman, Mammoth Lakes Town Council; Katy Walton, Caltrans; Ron Keil, USFS/Inyo alternate; Bill Dunkelberger, BLM; Denyse Racine, DFG; Debbie House, LADWP alternate

Members Absent: Cindi Mitton, Lahontan RWQCB; Joseph Saulque, Benton Paiute Reservation; Chris Plakos, LADWP; Jeff Bailey, USFS/Inyo; Kathy Lucich, USFS/Humboldt-Toiyabe; Art Sam, Bridgeport Indian Colony; Sandy Hogan, USFS/Inyo

Staff Present: Scott Burns, Gerry LeFrancois, Megan Simmons, C.D. Ritter

Guests Present: Kevin Kritz, US Fish & Wildlife Service; John Wenz, USFS/Stanslaus; Wendi Grasseschi, KDAY/MCWD; George Shirk, *Mammoth Monthly*; Nancy Peterson Walter, Range of Light and Cerro Coso; John Walter, Range of Light; Bob Peterson, Mammoth Pacific; Anne Halford, BLM; Mary Canada, Sierra Business Council; Dan Dawson, UC/Sierra Nevada Aquatic Research Lab; Fred Lenhart, Caltrans; Raymond Andrews, Mono Lake Kutzadikaa Indian Community Cultural Preservation Association; Carol Kavulla, citizen

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Chair Mary Pipersky called the meeting to order at 9:13 a.m.
2. **PUBLIC COMMENT:**
 - A. Mary Canada, Sierra Business Council: The upcoming document "Investing for Prosperity" will be presented at the CPT meeting May 29. The SBC's annual conference will be held Sept. 25-27 at the Mammoth Mountain Inn, structured in a workshop format.
 - B. Dan Dawson, University of California Sierra Nevada Aquatic Research Lab: The SNARL spring lecture series begins May 15 and runs weekly through June 19. The free lectures last approximately one hour, and the public is invited.
3. **MINUTES:** Review minutes of Feb. 27, 2003: The minutes of Feb. 27 were adopted with one addition: Item 7, end of second paragraph: "San Bernardino County's 1,600 identified routes can not be processed until the processing moratorium is lifted. The county has not pursued alternate ways under the new regulations, probably due to cost." (Keil/Dunkelberger. Ayes: All.)
4. **AGENCY ROUNDTABLE:** Members provided updates on agency planning issues and upcoming projects.
5. **HOT SPRINGS ISSUES IN LONG VALLEY:** Staff Senior Planner Gerry LeFrancois, who also conducts meetings of the Long Valley Regional Planning Advisory Committee, relayed the RPAC's thanks to BLM for limiting vehicle access in sensitive areas and to DWP for installing fencing. Anne Halford, a BLM botanist, distributed photos of concerns, including a tour bus mired into the soil, and banks that had

sloughed off into the water. She explained that agencies want to manage use in an ecologically sound manner. Ongoing problems include vehicle use on sensitive land, loss of vegetative cover, soil erosion, effects on invertebrate and waterfowl habitat, and human waste. Camping at the springs not only causes damage, but also spoils the experience for others who want to enjoy the area. According to Debbie House, the springs area is a high priority for LADWP. Volunteer groups could be enlisted to construct more boardwalks based on a USFS design. Just as BLM initiated a campaign to educate climbers, maybe a campaign could be devised to educate hot springs users as well. Dan Dawson of SNARL pointed out, however, that hot springs users are not a cohesive group like climbers. Tourists could be educated at hotels, by chambers of commerce, etc., and local youth could learn about hot springs issues at high schools. A fact sheet could point out that resource damage due to driving around could result in enforced or seasonal closures. In order to be effective, a patrol presence or peer pressure oversight would be needed. National Trails Day will be observed June 7 by a workday at the springs dedicated to BLM's Steve Addington, former CPT member who moved to Monterey last year for cancer treatment. Organizers of the annual Earth Day celebration seek events/causes at which to have a presence, and such exposure for hot springs education could bring national recognition.

6. PENDING PANDORA MOTH REVISITATION: John Wenz, US Fish & Wildlife Service

Spectacular and noticeable outbreaks of Pandora moths occur in 20-year intervals in the western states. The moths sport a four-inch wingspan and showy pastel-colored bodies. Outbreaks are very obvious to the public and create temporary concerns for public health and safety. For example, the sheer numbers of moths can create a slick on highway surfaces, and nocturnal mating flights block out lights. Their specialized spines secrete a substance that can cause allergic reactions, respiratory effects, and rashes.

The whole function of their three- to 10-day lifespan is reproduction. The life cycle from egg to adult is about two years. Adults fly every other year, and are expected to emerge this summer, probably July and August. The USFS will monitor the outbreak, but no direct management action is planned. Female moths normally lay 150 to 200 eggs on tree trunks or needles, but lay eggs virtually anywhere during an outbreak. A natural enemy complex, consisting of parasites, viruses and predators such as birds and rodents, provides population control of the moths. Usually, the viruses cause a moth population to collapse by the second or third generation.

The moths are defined as defoliators; their larvae feed on pine needles. Trees munched by moths exhibit top kill and shorter growth rings, but very little mortality. Moths do not kill tree buds, so trees can continue their growth the next year.

Native American Raymond Andrews explained that Pandora moths do not damage the forest, but provide pruning by selective grazing. Their appearance causes no long- or short-term effects, and they are part of the functioning forest ecosystem. The USFS has a ~~pragmatic~~ **programmatic** agreement to consult with local tribes regarding Pandora moth visitations.

Nancy Peterson Walter, who wrote a book on the moths, noted that the Pandoras have been studied in the Eastern Sierra since 1912. Their larvae and pupae are utilized as a valuable food source by many peoples.

7. SAGE GROUSE LISTING PETITION: Kevin Kritz, US Fish & Wildlife Service

Kritz presented a PowerPoint on the 90-day finding that the sage grouse did not warrant emergency listing. He also discussed the status of listing petitions in general, and encouraged those present to get involved in sage grouse protection efforts and provide input to the Bi-State group and DFG.

8. SIERRA NEVADA FRAMEWORK REVIEW TEAM FINDINGS: Ron Keil, USFS/Inyo

Keil highlighted key elements of the team's yearlong efforts. Review areas have included protection of communities and wildlife, improved forest health, implementation of the HFQLG legislation, increased flexibility in grazing rules, balanced recreation use, and help for local communities. The team has been seeking opportunities to reduce the unintended and adverse impacts some of the standards and guidelines have created for grazing-permit holders, recreation users, permit holders and local communities. Wildlife surveys will require more time. The team identified specific activities such as a cooperative fuel management project. There is pressure to use fire as a tool on 70,000 acres of managed Jeffrey pine, but the risk is too high. The team's intent is to go in and fix problems, not shut down campgrounds or facilities.

9. SET NEXT MEETING: Thursday, April 24, 2003, at 9 a.m.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

- A. CPT Year in Review, 2002: Team members (April 24)
- D. Trout Planting: DFG (April 24)
- C. "Investing for Prosperity": Sierra Business Council (May 29)
- D. "The Obsidian Trail": Caltrans

10. ADJOURN: 12:57 p.m.